

House Republican Press Release

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Representative Greene Votes in Favor of Allowing Legislature to Guarantee Privacy of Tax Information



(Hartford, CT) State Representative Len Greene (R-105) today voted in favor of allowing the General Assembly to enact legislation that would guarantee the privacy of personal and business tax records. Several weeks ago, Attorney General Richard Blumenthal issued a legal opinion that allows a legislative committee to receive individual tax information of Connecticut residents, including names, addresses and Social Security numbers.

Rep. Greene joined fellow House Republican legislators in proposing that the Legislature's current Special Session be amended to allow for the passage of bills guaranteeing such personal information be off-limits to members of the General Assembly. The proposal was defeated in a nearly-party line, 77-56 vote.

The Legislature's Program Review and Investigations Committee is currently conducting a study of the state's tax system. Committee staff recently sought data from the corporate tax and personal income tax filings from the state Department of Revenue Services. Blumenthal's opinion referenced a 1993 state law, which he categorized as vague, in granting such access to the data.

After the release of the Attorney General's opinion, a representative from the Connecticut Business and Industry Association also raised the possibility that a business' tax return information could later be handed to non-government entities. In addition, Governor M. Jodi Rell expressed concern over a number confidentiality issues involved with granting access to personal tax information.

"Following the publicity surrounding the attorney general's ruling, I've heard from many constituents who are concerned that legislators would be able to view their personal or business' tax returns," said Rep. Greene. "They feel strongly that information should remain within the state's tax office. We will continue this fight when the next legislative session begins in February."

According to a draft scope of the tax study, the first phase will examine the state and local tax structure to determine how well the system performs based upon naturally recognized criteria. Depending on the outcome of the first phase and the desire of the

committee, the second phase may examine various alternatives for change, their potential benefits and drawbacks and how different options might impact different taxpayers in the state.

Representative Greene represents Ansonia, Beacon Falls and Seymour in the General Assembly.